



Department for Culture Media & Sport

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I am writing to express my concerns over the comments made by John Inverdale about Marion Bartoli, during the BBC's radio coverage of the Wimbledon women's final last weekend.

As the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, and Minister for Women and Equalities, I have particular regard for the portrayal of women in the media generally, and I have also identified increased coverage of women's sport as one of my key priorities.

It is therefore a matter of some concern to me that any comment on the looks and stature of a female athlete could be made in the context of one of the highlights of the UK's, and indeed the world's, sporting calendar. I am sure you will agree with me that it is vital that young women and girls in this country feel motivated both to take part in and to watch coverage of sport, and to know that they are included in the enjoyment of sport, and catered for by the media just as much as the male audience.

I understand that several hundred complaints have been made to the BBC about the comments. Whilst I note that Mr Inverdale has apologised both on-air, and directly in writing to Ms Bartoli, I would be grateful for an update on any further action that is likely to be taken following these complaints, and whether there may be positive steps that the BBC could take in the future to ensure that the perception of and commentary on female athletes, and women's sport generally, are as positive and inclusive as possible.



I would also welcome any update you may be able to provide on initiatives or safeguards that the BBC already has in place to ensure good practice in the areas of sexism and equalities more generally.

I am copying this letter to the Chair of the BBC Trust.

Rt Hon Maria Miller MP

Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport
and Minister for Women and Equalities